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CNRM
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National Council of
Maubere Resistance

Statement by Mr. Jose Ramos-Horta, Special Representative of the National Council of Maubere Resistance (CNRM) on the International Court of Justice's sentence on the Portugal Vs Australia case (Timor Gap)

We welcome the sentence that has just been handed down by the International Court of Justice on the case Portugal Vs Australia as a victory for the people of East Timor inasmuch as the highest UN legal body has endorsed the right of the people of East Timor to self-determination.

It is well-known that the essence of the Portuguese Republic's case against Australia rested on the merits of the right of the people of East Timor to self-determination. This right is universally recognised in several United Nations' General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. Even Australia stated during the oral proceedings that it recognises the right of the people of East Timor to self-determination.

The sentence that has just been read should be a signal to Indonesia that as much as it tries to suppress the right of the people of East Timor to self-determination, the Rule of Law will prevail.

It is also a clear sign to Australia that its hypocritical stance, pretending to be a law abiding citizen of the world while the same time it violates one of the peremptory norms of international law, has been thoroughly exposed.

The Portuguese Republic must be commended for its integrity and courage in standing up for justice and for the right of a small nation. This 800-year old country of a brave and proud people that for centuries pioneered the sea routes opening up most of the world, was first among the European nations in the exchange of culture, has been true to its great and rich history. The East Timorese will for ever be indebted to the Portuguese people for their friendship, support and solidarity. They were fully behind Portugal in this case and mandated the Portuguese Republic to take Australia to the world court.

Successive Australian governments have betrayed the people of East Timor and trampled upon the values of justice and freedom for all peoples shared by Australians. While we have only contempt for the hired guns and mercenaries in the Australian legal squad and condemn the Australian Government for its pathetic and hypocritical behaviour, we must not confuse them with the Australian people who share with the East Timorese the same notions of peace and human liberty and have been generous to us.

The ambitions of Foreign Minister Gareth Evans to be the next UN Secretary General and a Nobel Peace Prize laureate have been severely damaged by his own arrogant and hypocritical stance over the conflict in East Timor and the human rights situation in Indonesia. We will canvass support around the world to defeat Mr Evans' attempts to be the next UN Secretary-General. In these trying times, the UN needs a Secretary General candidate with integrity, a humble man or woman, a good listener, cool under pressure; and not a volatile, unpredictable, temperamental, self-serving and arrogant politician with a pasted up book on the UN.

The Hague, 30 June 1995

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